

## Article

---

### "Family Coresidence in Canada in 1871: Family Life-Cycles, Occupations and Networks of Mutual Aid"

Gordon Darroch et Michael D. Ornstein

*Historical Papers / Communications historiques*, vol. 18, n° 1, 1983, p. 30-55.

Pour citer cet article, utiliser l'information suivante :

URI: <http://id.erudit.org/iderudit/030898ar>

DOI: 10.7202/030898ar

Note : les règles d'écriture des références bibliographiques peuvent varier selon les différents domaines du savoir.

---

Ce document est protégé par la loi sur le droit d'auteur. L'utilisation des services d'Érudit (y compris la reproduction) est assujettie à sa politique d'utilisation que vous pouvez consulter à l'URI <https://apropos.erudit.org/fr/usagers/politique-dutilisation/>

---

Érudit est un consortium interuniversitaire sans but lucratif composé de l'Université de Montréal, l'Université Laval et l'Université du Québec à Montréal. Il a pour mission la promotion et la valorisation de la recherche. Érudit offre des services d'édition numérique de documents scientifiques depuis 1998.

Pour communiquer avec les responsables d'Érudit : [info@erudit.org](mailto:info@erudit.org)

# Family Coresidence in Canada in 1871: Family Life-Cycles, Occupations and Networks of Mutual Aid

GORDON DARROCH AND MICHAEL D. ORNSTEIN\*

The household and household economy have recently assumed a more central place in social history. In the production and the reproduction of social life, the household emerges as a highly adaptive institution.<sup>1</sup> Rather than being stripped to a nuclear core by the imperatives of industrial capitalism, new evidence shows that the complexity of households increased with early industrialization, at least in some places.<sup>2</sup> Most research deals with simple extensions of a nuclear unit to include additional relatives, and single lodgers and boarders.<sup>3</sup> This paper deals with a more complex form of nineteenth century household, which is shared by two or more unrelated families or marital units.

These households are of interest to us, first, on the elementary grounds that sharing households among families is so rare a phenomenon in our own experience. It takes no very elegant theory of social relations to presume that the extension of households entails a complicated balance of economic burdens and productive capacities and of personal commitments for members at varying life-cycle stages.

---

\* The project on which this paper is based is jointly conducted by the authors; Darroch is senior author of this paper. The project has been supported by grants from SSHRC; we thank the Council. Preparation of the data employed in this research was carried out by the Institute for Behavioural Research of York University. We particularly thank Maureen Pereira for typing several versions of the paper.

1. Tamara Hareven, "The Family as Process: The Historical Study of the Family Cycle", *Journal of Social History*, VII (Spring 1974); Virginia Yans McLaughlin, "Patterns of Work and Family Organization: Buffalo's Italians", *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, II (Autumn 1971); Crandall Shifflett, "The Household Composition of Rural Black Families: Louisa County, Virginia, 1880", *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, VI (Autumn 1975).
2. Michael Anderson, *Family Structure in Nineteenth Century Lancashire* (Cambridge, 1971) and "Household Structure and the Industrial Revolution; Mid-Nineteenth Century Preston In Comparative Perspective", in Peter Laslett, ed., *Household and Family in Past Time* (Cambridge, 1972), pp. 215-35; David Kertzer, "The Impact of Urbanization on Household Composition: Implications from An Italian Parish (1880-1910)", *Urban Anthropology*, 7 (Spring 1978).
3. Anderson, *Family Structure*; Michael B. Katz, *The People of Hamilton, Canada West* (Cambridge, Mass., 1975), ch. 5; David Gagan, *Hopeful Travellers: Families, Land and Social Change in Mid-Victorian Peel County, Canada West* (Toronto, 1981), ch. 4; John Modell and Tamara Hareven, "Urbanization and the Malleable Household: An Examination of Boarding and Lodging in American Families", *Journal of Marriage and The Family*, 35 (August 1973).

## FAMILY CORESIDENCE IN CANADA

Even in that clearly less privatized social world, there must have been important differences between the experiences of residing temporarily with kin or with others as a young, unmarried boarder, and drawing your spouse and children into the close circle of another family.<sup>4</sup>

This paper employs a stratified, random sample of about ten thousand households drawn from the 1871 census of Canada.<sup>5</sup> Most of the analysis concerns the subsample of 1022 households that contained two or more apparently unrelated families or marital units.<sup>6</sup> The identification of coresident families is very straightforward since the instructions to census takers indicated that every "dwelling house" and every family within houses was to be separately indicated. Moreover, a census dwelling unit (which we call a household) was explicitly defined as separate if it had no ready internal communication with another unit and had a separate entrance to the outside.<sup>7</sup> In more conventional terms, the families and marital units with different family names were also indicated and can be separated in the nominal returns.<sup>8</sup>

The analysis begins with an examination of the overall distribution of household types in Canada by province and by rural and urban areas within them. The next section focuses on the composition of the complex households. We are initially concerned with the composition of the family groups in the larger household, in terms of the marital statuses of the heads and the numbers and ages of children. Of equal interest are the relationships among the characteristics of the coresident family groups, particularly their stages of the family life-cycle.

---

4. Gordon Darroch and Michael D. Ornstein, "The Regional Economy of Family and Household in Nineteenth Century Canada", paper presented at the American Sociological Association, San Francisco, September 1982, p. 13.

5. The original sample was a sample of households. Households were chosen with *different* probabilities, depending upon the province and urban or rural area. Urban areas were oversampled, as were the Maritime provinces; German households, English households in Quebec and French households in Ontario and New Brunswick were also over sampled. In the subsample of multiple-family households, the "numbers of cases" values in tables are weighted to account for the unequal sampling probabilities. The numbers of cases are conservative in that statistics estimated for the various groups are at least as precise as the statistics that would be obtained from a *simple random sample* with the indicated number of cases.

6. By marital units, as distinct from families, we mean couples without children present or ever-married persons (widows, widowers and married persons with absent spouses).

7. *Census of Canada, Manual Containing The Census Act and Instructions to Officers Employed in Taking The First Census of Canada* (Ottawa, 1871). Note that other authors define household in ways that reflect other enumeration procedures; see for example, Anderson, "Household Structure".

8. *Ibid.*, p. 22.

## HISTORICAL PAPERS 1983 COMMUNICATIONS HISTORIQUES

A second concern is with female "stem" families. Two or more families with different surnames residing in the same household could still be members of a single extended family. The most likely case involved the coresidence of a newly married daughter and her husband with her parents. Anderson finds this a common pattern in Lancashire and Chudacoff has analyzed the same pattern in one New England town.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, although we commonly presume that the inheritance of farm and other property passes only infrequently through the female line in nineteenth century Canada, the incidence of female "stem" families extending beyond the first years after marriage is unknown. We will estimate the incidence of this form of household in Canada in 1871.

A third focus is on the family "life-cycles" of the coresiding units. In this analysis we are able to consider whether particular life-cycle "squeezes" characterize the coresidential families, as well as considering patterns of mutual aid between the units where different family-cycle stages generate varying needs and resources. A related analysis considers the occupations of (male) heads of coresidential families and their rural-urban differences.

A final concern is with a different aspect of the relationship between coresiding family units. By comparing the characteristics of the family heads we will make inferences regarding the significance of occupational, immigrant and ethnic group networks in fostering household sharing.

### Identifying Coresidential Households

The identification of households composed of unrelated, coresiding families requires a knowledge of the relations among household members. Unfortunately, the census of 1871 neither indicates the relation of individual members to the head of families or of the household (as did some U.S. and British censuses), nor categorizes individuals as members of the family or not (as in the 1861 Census of Canada). Hence we are required to infer relations from the information on surnames, age patterns and the order in which members are listed, in addition to the census classification by family and household boundaries.

The development of the full household and family classification scheme used in this analysis is described in greater detail in a previous paper;<sup>10</sup> here we will describe the main principles of classification and indicate how the classification differs from others. First, we are interested mainly in household complexity, defined in terms of the multiplicity of marital units and associated children, rather than in the more common orientation of identifying forms of extension of the family of the head. This approach

---

9. Anderson, *Family Structure*, pp. 139-44; Howard Chudacoff, "New Branches On the Family Tree: Household Structure in Early Stages of the Family Cycle in Worcester, Massachusetts, 1860-1880", in Tamara Hareven, ed., *Themes in the History of The Family* (Worcester, 1978).

10. Darroch and Ornstein, "Regional Economy", pp. 4-8.

## FAMILY CORESIDENCE IN CANADA

is different from the well-known Hammel-Laslett scheme, and others like it, such as Katz's, which distinguish the forms of kinship extension among members of the domestic residential group, for example, extension upward or downward across generations.<sup>11</sup> Second, we specifically exclude single boarders and lodgers in making our classification of households; all never-married men and women whose surnames differed from any other ever-married person in the household are ignored. The boarding and lodging of single individuals is quite different, we believe, from the phenomena of "lodging" *families* and ever-married persons.

The three main principles of our classification are as follows. First, identical surnames are taken as a necessary and sufficient condition for persons to be considered as biologically related. Second, parent-child relationships are inferred from the marital statuses and age differences among those listed as families; a mother had to be at least fourteen years and no more than forty-five years of age when bearing children. And, third, the order of listing within families is taken into account in inferring parent-child relations. The census listings for 1871 are very orderly in this respect; only occasionally did enumerators vary from a pattern in which the head of the family is listed first, with men always listed ahead of their wives, with their children following in descending age.

The classification was carried out automatically by computer; households identified as potentially misclassified were scrutinized and manually reclassified. Complications usually arose when only one member of a married couple was present at the time of the census, when age differentials between probable parents were very large, or when children were not listed in order of descending age.

There are several related problems that the most careful examination of our records cannot correct. First, stem-like forms of household organization through the male line are readily detected since the identification of probable married sons living with their parents is straightforward. But the detection of comparable female stem-like family households is confounded by the change of daughters' names at marriage.<sup>12</sup> These households are classified as two apparently unrelated coresident families. A second form of misclassification arises from our exclusion, in classifying the household, of never-married persons whose surnames differ from others in the household. We take these to be boarders or lodgers, but it is possible that some are unmarried relatives of a wife or widow. In contrast, our classification does account for unmarried relatives of a husband or widower (who might be brothers, uncles or nephews), since they share surnames. At present we have no means of estimating the extent of this error. A third error entails presumed parent-child relations that actually involve grandchildren, uncles, aunts and cousins.

---

11. E.A. Hammel and Peter Laslett, "Comparing Household Structure Over Time and Between Cultures", *Comparative Studies in Society and History* (January 1974); Katz, *The People*, pp. 213-30.

12. We use the term stem-family households acknowledging that the concept of the stem family entails inheritance practices and not just coresidence of married members of two generations of a family.

**Table 1 Percentage distribution of household type by province by urbanization and percentage distribution of persons by household type, Canada 1871**

Household Type	Percentage of Households															Percentage Persons
	Ontario			Quebec			New Brunswick			Nova Scotia			Rural	Urban	Total	
	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	Total				
Non-Family Households	6.4	5.3	6.2	5.1	5.7	5.3	7.2	7.0	7.1	4.1	4.7	4.2	5.8	5.5	5.7	2.3
Nuclear Family Households	80.3	79.5	80.1	69.9	66.9	68.3	72.7	55.9	69.4	72.1	64.3	70.9	75.4	72.0	74.8	71.9
Stem-like Family Households (Male Line Only)	5.5	1.4	4.7	9.9	2.9	8.3	7.6	3.9	6.9	10.4	5.0	9.6	7.6	2.4	6.6	8.4
Other One Surname Households (incl. unmarried children and kin, if any)	3.4	2.0	3.2	4.1	2.5	3.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	5.1	2.5	4.7	3.8	2.3	3.5	3.9
Two Surname Households (incl. unmarried children and kin, if any)	4.2	9.8	5.2	11.3	16.2	12.4	8.6	19.3	10.7	7.7	17.4	9.1	7.0	13.4	8.2	10.8
Three or More Surname Households	0.2	2.0	0.5	0.6	5.7	1.7	1.1	11.1	3.1	0.7	6.1	1.5	0.4	4.3	1.2	2.6
Total	100.0	100.0	99.9	100.0	99.9	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	99.9	100.0	100.0	99.9	100.0	99.9
Number of cases	1238*	1031	1518	771	751	981	615	254	765	969	313	1130	2488	2132	3068	3068

\* The number of cases of provinces reflects the oversampling of urban areas. The numbers given here are conservative estimates of effective "n's" assuming simple random sampling.

## FAMILY CORESIDENCE IN CANADA

The consequences of these misclassifications are likely to be relatively minor, with the exception of the female stem form. The other misclassifications tend to inflate the category of nuclear-family households at the expense of a more complicated form of extended household.

### Household Composition: Canada, 1871

Table 1 provides an overview of the household categories in our scheme. The three aspects of these distributions are of particular interest in this paper.<sup>13</sup> As expected, most households were nuclear: fully 75 per cent of the households contained a married couple alone or with their children and 72 per cent of the population resided in these households. These findings conform to the well documented predominance of the nuclear family and household in the West, although there is great variability among countries and communities.<sup>14</sup>

The next most common form of household organization contains more than one unrelated family or marital unit. Over 9 per cent of households, containing 13 per cent of the population, were shared by two or more families. It is useful to remember that we have no historical information for large populations that actually traces the movements of individuals between households or the alteration of household forms as individuals pass through their life cycles; we must rely on inferences from cross-sectional data. Nevertheless, life-cycle patterns tend to indicate that although nuclear households predominate at any given point in time in a community, various forms of extended and multiple households are experienced by much larger numbers, perhaps a majority in their life time.<sup>15</sup>

The table also shows that there is great regional and rural-urban variation in the incidence of households with two or more surnames. Ontario was exceptional in that only 6 per cent of the households were multiple family units, whereas the other three provinces had at least double that proportion. In Quebec and New Brunswick over 14 per cent of households contained two or more families or marital units. Even more striking is the rural-urban differential: 17.7 per cent of urban households were

---

13. In a previous paper we examined the distributions and their implications in greater detail with particular emphasis on regional variations.

14. Compare, for example, for Canada, Katz, *The People*; Gérard Bouchard, "Family Structures and Geographic Mobility at Laterrière, 1851-1935", *Journal of Family History*, 2 (Winter 1977); Sheva Medjuck, "Family and Household Composition in the Nineteenth Century: The Case of Moncton, New Brunswick 1851-1871", *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, 4 (Fall 1979); Chad Gaffield, "Canadian Families in Cultural Context: Hypotheses from the Mid-Nineteenth Century", *Historical Papers* (1979).

15. Lutz K. Berkner, "The Stem Family and The Developmental Cycle of The Peasant Household: An Eighteenth-Century Austrian Example", *American Historical Review*, 11 (April 1972); Tamara Hareven, "Cycles, Courses and Cohorts: Reflections on Theoretical and Methodological Approaches to the History of Family Development", *Journal of Social History*, XII (Fall 1978).

multiple, compared to 7.4 per cent of rural households. In the urban areas of Quebec and Nova Scotia nearly one quarter of all households had two or more families or marital units. In urban New Brunswick shared residence included fully one in every three households.<sup>16</sup>

An interesting comparison to these results is provided by Bradbury in her careful examination of the family economy in Montreal in 1871. She reports a surprisingly high rate of household sharing among unrelated families and couples; in Ste. Anne Ward nearly 20 per cent of the households contained more than one unrelated family and in St. Jacques Ward nearly 30 per cent of households were coresidential. Comparing these figures to the few other previous studies in which coresidence is reported, she concludes that the high rates were probably peculiar to the conditions of these working class Montreal communities.<sup>17</sup>

For nineteenth century Canada, at least, our national data show that the sharing of residential space by more than one family was not at all uncommon. The very high rates of coresidence that Bradbury found for working class areas of Montreal are not exceptional. There are, in addition, important regional and rural-urban variations in the phenomena.

### **Explanations of Coresidence**

Coresidence has been a concern of several studies and a variety of reasons for its occurrence in the last century has been offered. A brief review of these accounts is useful before turning to a more detailed examination of the composition of coresidential households. One reasonable, initial reaction to the surprising complexity of households is simply to question the adequacy of the census data; could the incidence and patterns be largely artifacts of errors of enumeration? The problem might be especially severe in cities if the separation of houses, households and families within them is not clear. But as Bradbury has indicated, the Canadian census seems particularly orderly in this respect.<sup>18</sup> The instructions to enumerators were very precise. A second reason to trust the census data is the relatively high proportion of separate, single family dwellings in nineteenth century Canadian cities; tenements, row housing and crowded quarters were documented features of some nineteenth century Canadian cities, but they were not the primary features of the urban landscape.<sup>19</sup> A number of recent community studies and some nineteenth century

---

16. Urban areas are defined as incorporated towns and cities. In a few cases in the Maritime provinces, where the density of population around towns was very high, we classified the entire census district as urban.

17. Bettina Bradbury, "The Family Economy and Work in an Industrializing City: Montreal in the 1870s", *Historical Papers* (1979), p. 94.

18. *Ibid.*

19. Bradbury, "Family Economy", p. 92; Greg Kealey, *Hogtown: Working Class Toronto at the Turn of the Century* (Toronto, 1974).

## FAMILY CORESIDENCE IN CANADA

documents indicate that single family dwellings and relatively high and uniform rates of homeownership among all occupational groups were characteristic of Canadian cities.<sup>20</sup>

The sharing of accommodation among families has also been attributed simply to housing shortages. Anderson cites the case of two Lancashire towns, the village of Middleton and the city of Preston. In Preston, two and a half times as many young couples could be documented as sharing homes with their parents as in Middleton. Yet there is evidence that economic motives and normative encouragement for house sharing were as great in the latter as the former; the difference lies, he believes, in the fact that the larger city had a severe housing shortage and rents were high.<sup>21</sup> For Canada, Bradbury cites qualitative evidence of housing shortages in the wards of Montreal as a likely source of doubling up of unrelated families.<sup>22</sup>

There is certainly an urgent need for additional studies of housing, but the existence of housing shortages alone cannot serve to explain coresidence. In a society where housing itself was relatively cheap and land relatively plentiful, housing shortages reflect either poverty or monopolization of the housing and land markets. This must be especially true in rural areas. In any case we cannot simply equate coresidence and housing shortages.

This paper does not pursue the comparison of coresident to other households, but one datum does lend support to a more general "poverty" explanation. For all of Canada in 1871, our sample shows that 14.7 per cent of the households headed by labourers and 15.8 per cent of those headed by semi-skilled workers involved coresidence; for households headed by merchants or manufacturers, professionals, other nonmanual workers, and artisans the corresponding percentages were 9.2, 5.8, 8.8 and 12.3. There is thus a rough negative correlation between social class and the incidence of family coresidence.

Some other research has posed questions regarding the nature of complex, multifamily households in social rather than economic terms. One common pattern

---

20. Herbert Brown Ames, *The City Below the Hill* (1897; reprinted Toronto, 1972); Michael J. Piva, *The Condition of the Working Class in Toronto — 1900-1921* (Ottawa, 1979), ch. 5; Michael Katz, Michael Doucet and Mark Stern, *The Social Organization of Early Industrial Capitalism* (Cambridge, Mass., 1982), p. 133; Michael Doucet, "Working Class Housing in a Small Nineteenth Century Canadian City: Hamilton, Ontario 1852-1881", in Greg Kealey and Peter Warrian, eds., *Essays in Canadian Working Class History* (Toronto, 1976), pp. 83-105; Gordon Darroch, "Occupational Structure, Assessed Wealth and Home Owning During Toronto's Early Industrialization, 1861-1899", *Histoire sociale/Social History*, forthcoming.

21. Michael Anderson, "The Study of Family Structure", in E.A. Wrigley, ed., *Nineteenth Century Society: Essays in the Use of Quantitative Methods for the Study of Social Data* (London, 1972), pp. 50-1.

22. Bradbury, "Family Economy", pp. 4-5.

## HISTORICAL PAPERS 1983 COMMUNICATIONS HISTORIQUES

may have been the coresidence of newlyweds with the wife's parents, especially before the birth of their children. Hence, urban coresidence in particular may have been a relatively brief interlude in the earliest stages of the family life-cycle.<sup>23</sup> In other circumstances the period of coresidence for these families may have extended through the earliest stages of childbearing and childrearing, at a point when the squeeze on family resources was greatest; mothers of young wives may have taken care of children while the wives found employment outside the home.<sup>24</sup> Alternatively, coresidence may have mainly involved widowed relatives or others who served in a child-care capacity and, at the same time, gained a roof over their heads, modest security and companionship. The latter would be an expected pattern in places where there was wage labour for women outside the home. Finally, the coresidence of widows and widowers with younger couples, either with their daughters' families or with non-kin, may simply have been a form in which communities extended care to indigent old people.

Still more complex accounts of family coresidence argue that it reflects the adaptability of households in providing the only nineteenth century social welfare available in times of need; they may also have been essential ports of entry into local job markets for migrants, especially urban migrants. Migration in the nineteenth century often involved entire families, and that might be responsible for the high levels of urban coresidence.<sup>25</sup> Going one step further, the complex households of the nineteenth century might have served as income pooling institutions in which the families attempted to concentrate their labour and minimized their consumption costs under conditions where there were several potential sources of employment and sustenance, for example, subsistence and market oriented farming, wage labour and informal exchanges of commodities or labour.<sup>26</sup>

These questions direct our attention to the characteristics of the families comprising the coresident households. The "poverty" and "life-cycle squeeze" arguments point to ways in which the coresident families combine resources or provide aid to each other. The migration and income pooling issues lead us to examine the similarities of coresiding families, which might serve as a clue to the form of social networks in which they were involved.

---

23. Chudacoff, "New Branches", pp. 55-72.

24. Anderson, "Study of Family", p. 50.

25. Gordon Darroch, "Migrants in the Nineteenth Century: Fugitives of Families in Motion", *Journal of Family History*, 6 (Fall 1981); Leslie Page Moch, *Rural Exodus, Urban Growth: Migration in a Regional Context, Eastern Languedoc, 1850-1906* (Beverly Hills, Calif., 1983).

26. Darroch and Ornstein, "Regional Economy", p. 38; Immanuel Wallerstein, William G. Martin and Torry Dickinson, "Household Structures and Production Processes: Preliminary Theses and Findings", *Review*, V (Winter 1982).

## FAMILY CORESIDENCE IN CANADA

### Characteristics of Coresidential Families

In the following discussion our references to coresidential "families" refer more correctly to marital units, including couples or to widowers and widows without children present; the data make the references clear in context.

The first section of Table 2 shows that 73 per cent of families heading the coresidential households were married couples. Only about 40 per cent of the second and third family units were headed by couples.<sup>27</sup> Households with first families headed by widows and widowers made up 14 and 8 per cent of the sample. Fully a third of the second families were headed by widows and about 14 per cent by widowers. In some families one of the spouses was absent at the time of the enumeration; the proportion is much larger in the second and third units (where they are 12 and 16 per cent of the households) than in the first. Whether the missing spouses are merely visitors elsewhere or working away from home, of course, cannot be determined.

A suitable basis of comparison for these figures is the distribution of heads of non-coresiding nuclear families; fully 90 per cent of them are headed by couples, 3 percent are headed by widowers and 7 per cent by widows. Only 0.5 per cent are headed by a married person whose spouse was not present. These results provide support for the argument that coresidence frequently served as a means of caring for widowed persons and married people with absent spouses who had no means of self-support. Of course, they may also have been engaged as assistance to the other families in the home. Deciding between these alternatives requires an examination of the compositions of the families, to which we turn in a moment. However, family coresidence was by no means limited to these forms; both a substantial proportion of first families were headed by widowed persons and many second families were headed by married couples.

The census data distinguish newlyweds from other married persons. Some community studies have shown that coresidence was quite common among newlyweds, although its incidence varied among the communities.<sup>28</sup> Our data show that in Canada in 1871 very few coresidential households had newlywed members. Clearly family coresidence in Canada is not mainly a result of a tendency to house young couples temporarily immediately after marriage.

The second section of Table 2 gives the mean ages of the members of various marital units for each family. The data reinforce the impression that coresidence was not mainly a means of providing assistance to young couples and to indigent elderly. The heads of the coresidential families are relatively old, early middle-aged certainly. Considering that we expect about half of all men and women to be married by their late

---

27. In the subsample there are at least two families or marital units without children present. A portion have three or more (15 per cent). Such a small number have four or more that we ignore them in the analysis.

28. Chudacoff, "New Branches"; Katz, Doucet and Stern, *Social Organization*, p. 293.

HISTORICAL PAPERS 1983 COMMUNICATIONS HISTORIQUES

**Table 2 Selected socio-demographic characteristics of families in coresidential households: Canada 1871**

Family Characteristic	Number of Family		
	First	Second	Third
Percentage Distribution of Type of Family			
Married Couple Present	73	37	41
Newlywed Couple Present*	1	4	4
Married Male, Wife Absent	3	5	11
Married Female, Husband Absent	1	7	5
Widower	8	14	11
Widow	14	33	28
Total	100	100	100
Mean Age			
Married Couple, Male	45.0	37.8	37.6
Married Couple, Female	39.9	34.4	32.6
Newlywed Male	26.3	25.3	26.4
Newlywed Female	22.4	21.2	23.6
Widower	57.8	60.1	60.5
Widow	56.1	59.3	61.6
Percentage Distribution of Number of Children			
None	24	59	53
One	16	18	16
Two-Three	27	15	21
Four-Five	18	5	6
Six or More	15	3	3
Total	100	100	100
Number of Cases for Above	550	550	90
Percentage Distribution of Life-Cycle Stages			
Married Couples**			
No Children	20	43	41
All Children 6 or under	19	31	26
Eldest Child 7-14	27	15	20
Eldest Child 15 or older	34	11	13
Total	100	100	100
Number of cases	431	289	55

FAMILY CORESIDENCE IN CANADA

Family Characteristic	Number of Family		
	First	Second	Third
<b>Widowers</b>			
No Children	37	74	
All Children 6 or under	3	3	
Eldest Child 7-14	14	11	
Eldest Child 15 or older	47	12	
Total	100	100	
Number of Cases	42	79	10
<b>Widows</b>			
No Children	31	70	64
All Children 6 or under	2	5	0
Eldest Child 7-14	8	6	0
Eldest Child 15 or older	59	19	36
Total	100	100	100
Number of cases	77	182	25

\* Newlyweds are those listed in the Census as married in the last year.

\*\* Married individuals with absent spouses included as couples.

twenties in the nineteenth century, mean ages of thirty-five to forty-five years for married couples indicates that these tended to be well established families.<sup>29</sup> In our national sample, 54 per cent of the heads of all (non-coresiding) nuclear family households were under forty-five years of age, compared to 48 per cent of the heads of coresidential family households.<sup>30</sup> Comparing the coresiding families indicates that for married couples, the male heads of the first family averaged eight years older than male heads of the second or third units, and their spouses were about five-and-one-half years older, on average. Widowed family heads were, as one expects, much older than the married family heads, averaging about sixty years of age.

29. Lorne Tepperman, "Ethnic Variations in Marriage and Fertility: Canada 1871", *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, 11 (November 1974); p. 329; Katz, Doucet and Stern, *Social Organization*, pp. 258-60; Gagan, *Hopeful Travellers*, pp. 75-7; Ellen M. Thomas Gee, "Marriage in Nineteenth Century Canada", *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, 19 (August 1982). Note that Gee has shown that there are very consistent differences (of about three years) between men and women in mean age of marriage throughout the last half of the 19th century and that there were significant regional variations for men and women.

30. Heads of male stem-like family households were still older; only 40 per cent of the heads were under forty-five years of age in Canada in 1871.

## HISTORICAL PAPERS 1983 COMMUNICATIONS HISTORIQUES

Two other variables are included in the table, the number of children and a simplified family life-cycle classification (a more detailed classification, introduced below, follows similar lines). The ages of the children chosen to demarcate life-cycle stages are, of course, arbitrary. They were chosen to distinguish families in which all children required more or less full time care (six years or under), from those in which there was a mix of young and adolescent children, where some likely assumed domestic responsibilities or worked. The fourth stage here simply assumes many children of labour-force age added in some fashion to family sustenance or income. The ages also correspond to school attendance; children seldom attended school before the age of seven or after the age of fourteen, at least in many areas of the country.<sup>31</sup>

The most striking feature of these data is the contrast in the numbers of children in the first family as compared to the second and third families. The differences are very great; 60 per cent of the first families have two or more children, whereas 60 per cent of the second families have no children at all. Another 18 per cent of the second families have only one child present.

The life-cycle data reveal more of these patterns. First, among married couples who headed the household, a third had one or more children over fifteen years of age and a quarter had an eldest child between seven and fourteen years. Only 20 per cent had no child living with them. The reverse held for the second and third listed families headed by couples; over 40 per cent were without children and there were decreasing proportions in each successive life-cycle stage. The age differentials between the couples is too slight to account entirely for this reversal of the life-cycle pattern. Considering widows and widowers, the differences between first and other families are even more striking. Nearly half of all widowers and 60 per cent of widows who headed the households had at least one child of labour force age living with them. Only 31 per cent of widows who headed households and 37 per cent of widowers were heads without any children present. Quite the opposite was true of the much older widowed persons who headed second and third units; 70 per cent or more were living without any children.

With respect to the complete families, there is some limited evidence here of a form of family-cycle "squeeze", since those who share houses are least often couples with no children or only very young ones; fully 60 per cent of all the couples have adolescent children or labour force aged children. Couples willing and able to have coresident families do so mainly as their children acquire some self-reliance and perhaps have tipped the balance of the family economy away from bare subsistence.<sup>32</sup> On the other hand, the families that sought accommodation with others were made up of somewhat younger couples who were mostly without children and overwhelmingly had none or only very young children to care for; only about one in ten had even one child over fifteen years.

31. Gagan, *Hopeful Travellers*, p. 80.

32. Shifflett has shown that impoverished black families in nineteenth century Virginia expelled kin and friends at early stages of the family cycle and regained them in the later stages; "Household Composition", pp. 246-7.

## FAMILY CORESIDENCE IN CANADA

### ESTIMATES OF FEMALE "STEM" FAMILIES

One of the main questions that arises from the findings of Table 1 is simply whether family coresidence might be largely accounted for by the frequency with which married daughters took up residence in their parents' household. Table 1 reveals that there was a quite substantial proportion of male stem-like family households in Canada in 1871, about 6 per cent of all the households. Perhaps a large proportion of the 8 per cent of coresidential households in our classification are comparable "female stem" households. We are able only to estimate the possible occurrence employing, first, age differences between the possible mother and daughters and, second, the ethnic origins of the possible father and daughter. Potential daughters had to be at least fourteen years younger and no more than forty-five years younger than their mothers. The more restrictive criterion, combining age and ethnicity, takes into account that all offspring were assigned the national origin of their fathers in the census. Ethnic origin or nationality is a specific item of information on the 1871 personal census schedules and is distinct from birthplace.

Table 3 presents these estimates. By the more restrictive criterion, age *and* ethnicity, the largest proportion occurs in rural Nova Scotia, 22 per cent; by the more lenient criterion of age alone, 34 per cent of all coresidential households would qualify in rural Nova Scotia. Overall, urban areas have fewer such households, a little over 20 per cent on average for the more lenient criterion and 10 per cent by the more restrictive one. Rural areas average about 25 per cent and 15 per cent by the two criteria. There are some regional variations, but the similarity in the estimates across provinces is more striking.

These estimates are upper bounds of the proportion of female stem-like households; the true proportions are certainly smaller. Many coresidential households could qualify for the age differential without involving relations (see Table 2) and, as we shall show, there are also strong tendencies for unrelated families within the same ethnic communities to reside together (see Table 7). Assuming that 25 per cent of all coresidential households in Canada were female stem families and 9 per cent of all households were coresidential, then (multiplying) a little over 2 per cent of all households in Canada contained parents and married daughters. There is no doubt that the coresidence of married sons with parents was a good deal more common than for married daughters in Canada in 1871. Table 1 indicates that there are similar provincial patterns of the ratio of male stem-family households to the estimated female forms. In every case, for urban and rural areas, male stem-like households exceed females, although one must compute the comparable per cent from Table 3.<sup>33</sup>

The tendency for stem-like households to be concentrated in rural areas suggests strongly that the inheritance of farm property is directly related to the stem-form of

---

33. The proportions in Table 3 can be multiplied by a factor of about .10 to estimate the provincial per cent. Specifically, they could be multiplied by the proportions in row 5 of Table 1.

**Table 3 Estimates of female “stem” family households as proportions of all coresidential households, by province and urbanization, Canada 1871**

Criterion for Definition of Female “Stem” Family*	Rural				Urban			
	Ontario	Quebec	New Brunswick	Nova Scotia	Ontario	Quebec	New Brunswick	Nova Scotia
Age Differentials	21	28	23	34	20	20	29	20
Age Differentials <i>and</i> Ethnicity	13	19	17	22	11	13	10	10
Number of cases	217	182	92	88	114	169	83	77

\* Defined in text

## FAMILY CORESIDENCE IN CANADA

household in nineteenth century Canada as in Europe. That both male and female stem-like households tend to be most common in Quebec (considering both rural and urban areas) reinforces the suggestion that in Quebec the maintenance of family solidarity by means of stem families was a more common feature than elsewhere in Canada. This broad conclusion does not, of course, help unravel the intriguing paradoxes highlighted in Bouchard's study of stem families in Quebec — migration was encouraged in pursuit of sustaining family continuity.<sup>34</sup>

## CORESIDENTIAL HOUSEHOLDS AND FAMILY LIFE-CYCLES

Much recent work on the history of the family has revealed the adaptability of the institution in the face of changing socio-economic circumstances.<sup>35</sup> Others have emphasized the linkage between "family time" and the tempo of changes in the wider society.<sup>36</sup> The question of the life-cycles of coresidential households was considered in Table 2. A more detailed consideration of the timing of household sharing is warranted by the argument that household extension in general might be the primary means families had to adapt to the intensity of the squeeze on household resources in their early phases, when all their children needed care but were not productive. This mode of adaptation through the incorporation of adult kin, boarders or live-in labourers has most often been associated with farm labour requirements in Eastern Europe, but the general argument has been widely borrowed in studies of Western Europe and North American communities.<sup>37</sup>

In contrast to the expectation that early childbearing years would be those in which households were most commonly extended, studies of family life-cycle patterns often indicate quite the opposite. Families in the stages of greatest economic burden often are stripped to the minimum, apparently to reduce the number of consumers, rather than augmented by additional working members.<sup>38</sup> Table 2 shows that the first units in coresident households, if they were couples, strongly tended to have older children and that the second units, if couples, most often were without children or had only very young children.

---

34. Bouchard, "Family Structures".

35. Gaffield, "Canadian Families"; Yans McLaughlin, "Patterns of Work"; Shifflett, "Household Composition".

36. Tamara Hareven, "Family Time and Industrial Time: Family and Work in a Planned Corporation Town, 1900-1924", *Journal of Urban History*, 1 (May 1975).

37. The source work is A. V. Chayanov; see David Thorne, B. Kerblay and R.E.F. Smith, eds., *A. V. Chayanov on the Theory of the Peasant Economy* (Homewood, Ill., 1966). For uses in North America, see Gaffield, "Canadian Families"; Shifflett, "Household Composition"; Katz, Doucet and Stern, *Social Organization*, pp. 292-3.

38. Shifflett "Household Composition", pp. 947-8; Katz, Doucet and Stern, *Social Organization*, pp. 293-4. Also see Marta Tienda, "Dependency, Extension and the Family Life Cycle Squeeze in Peru", paper presented at the American Sociological Association meetings, San Francisco, Sept. 4-8 1978.

HISTORICAL PAPERS 1983 COMMUNICATIONS HISTORIQUES

**Table 4 Life-Cycle stages of families in coresidential households, Canada 1871**

	First Family			Second Family		
	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	Total
I Newly Established Families: No Children, Wife or Female Head Under 45 years	7	12	8	19	16	18
II Young Children Families: All Children 6 years or less	15	19	16	17	17	17
III Young and Adolescent Children: Eldest Child 7-14; Youngest Child under 6	19	17	19	7	7	7
IV Adolescent Children: All Children 7-14 years	4	5	4	3	7	3
V Mixed, Young and Labour Force Aged Children: Eldest 15 years or over; Youngest under 6	11	7	10	2	3	3
VI Mixed, Adolescent and Labour Force Aged Children: Eldest 15 years or over; Youngest 7-14	12	13	12	3	7	3
VII Labour Force Aged Children: All Children over 15 years	15	16	15	7	10	8
VIII "Empty Nest" Families: No Children; Wife or Widow over 45 years	13	8	12	26	22	26
IX Widower or Husband alone, No Children	4	2	4	16	11	15
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Number of Cases	448	381	552*	448	381	552*

\* N's in totals represent weighted distributions

## FAMILY CORESIDENCE IN CANADA

Table 4 examines these trends more closely. Nine family life-cycle stages are distinguished for both the first and second families and urban-rural differences are included. The number of cases where there were third families coresiding is too small to merit scrutiny. Couples and widowed persons are not distinguished in the table (only in the case of the second unit do most of the latter fall into the "empty nest" stages; see Table 2).

The first families or units in coresidential households are spread over all the stages of family life. Fully 60 per cent were families with at least one child over the age of seven; more significantly, nearly 40 per cent were families with at least one child fifteen or older. Indeed, Table 4 shows that as many of these units were families with *all* their children labour-force aged as were families with all children under six years. In sum, like studies of family extension in general, we find no sign that family augmentation is a response to being overburdened with young mouths to feed.

Whereas about a quarter of all the first of these coresidential units have no children present, and only 8 per cent are newly established families, nearly 60 per cent of the second units include no children and 18 per cent are newly established. As noted earlier, over 40 per cent of second families are older couples or widowed persons without their children. A slightly greater proportion of second families have young children than in the case of the first units (17 per cent), but again there are substantial numbers of these families with older children (8 per cent have all their children fifteen or over).

Thus the life-cycle pattern for these second families is much more distinct; they are mainly in the very early or in the late stages of the family cycle. In contrast to the families that head these households, the coresident families either seem more likely to be in need of temporary lodging and assistance or able to lend assistance.

The contrast between rural and urban areas reveals two patterns.<sup>39</sup> In rural areas, the first and second families are more likely to be in the "empty nest" stage, while in urban areas both families are more likely to include labour-force aged children; the rural-urban differences are small for the first family units, but quite marked for the second, where nearly twice as many have children who are all adolescent or labour-force aged.

Table 5 presents evidence of the relationship between the life-cycle stages of first and second families. Because of the rather small numbers in some cells of the full cross-classification, the number of life-cycle stages is reduced to four. About a quarter of all coresident households are made up of first families with at least one child aged seven or older and coresident older persons without children. The next most common combination involves two families both with children over the age of seven years (about 13 per cent). Combinations of families with children over age seven and

---

39. Urban areas as defined by the incorporation acts include many small towns and villages, although some other places of similar size are excluded.

**Table 5 Joint percentage distribution and ratio of observed to expected frequencies (under the assumption of independence) for family life-cycle stages of coresidential families (in parentheses)**

Life-Cycle Stages of First Family		Life-Cycle Stages of Second Family				Total
		I	II	III	IV	
I	Newly-Established Females (No children)	2 (1.3)	1 (0.9)	2 (1.0)	3 (0.9)	8
II	Young-Children Families: All Children Age 6 or Less	2 (0.8)	3 (1.2)	4 (1.1)	6 (1.0)	16
III	Older Children Families: Children Age 7 or More	11 (1.0)	10 (0.9)	13 (0.9)	27 (1.1)	60
IV	“Empty-Nest” Families	3 (1.1)	3 (1.1)	5 (1.4)	4 (0.7)	16
Total		18	17	24	41	100

families with younger children occur about as frequently as those with children over seven and couples without children (10 and 11 per cent).

Many of these coresidential households were simply plugged with people, many of whom were older children. For example, for those households in the most frequent category, combining older children and “empty-nest” units, the first families had a mean of 4.1 children per household. For those combining two families with older children, the mean number in the first family was 3.8 children and mean of the second unit was 2.8 children, well over six children plus adults. There was, of course, great variation among the households. For families at all stages of their cycles the mean number of children in the first units was 2.6 and the mean in the second just 1.1, reflecting the large number of units without children present. In general, however, these were large households. The mean household size for coresidential units with two couples was 8.6 in Canada as a whole; for those in which there were two widowed persons and no couples, the mean size was still 6.2 persons. For those few households in which a couple and a married person without a spouse present resided with children, the mean size was 10.6.<sup>40</sup>

The common hypothesis that ascribes coresidence *merely* to the circumstance of

40. Darroch and Ornstein, “Regional Economy”, Table 1.

## FAMILY CORESIDENCE IN CANADA

scarce housing does not fit well with these data; it seems likely that the older children in many of these families would have sought accommodation and work elsewhere rather than remaining with their parents, only to be further cramped by the addition of a widowed adult or even another complete family. Moreover, too few of these families are newly established to support the notion that coresidence was mainly the short term sharing of houses by parents and young couples shortly after the couple's marriage (nor is this supported by the age patterns of heads of families or our estimates of stem families). Still further, although sizeable portions of the units are widows and widowers, it is clear that household sharing is not primarily a means of caring for the elderly as some form of community welfare. Coresidence, no doubt, involved all of these factors, but it must involve more if we are to account for the complexity of the patterns and especially for the numbers of households containing older children.

A second set of figures in Table 5 gives the ratios of the observed numbers of households in the various categories to the number expected on the assumption that the life-cycle stages of the first and second families are unrelated. The ratios are all close to one, which simply indicates that the life-cycle stages are composed of unique *combinations* of family types, although the compositions of the first and second families differ considerably.

The evidence that there were very substantial regional variations in the incidence of coresidence itself (Table 1) led us to consider the variations in family cycle patterns among the provinces. An examination of regional differences, in fact, indicated that the patterns were quite similar. A log-linear analysis that included selected interprovincial contrasts confirmed that there were no statistically significant differences.

### OCCUPATIONS OF MALE FAMILY HEADS

We now turn briefly to the occupations of the heads of coresiding families. This analysis is limited by the use of the personal census only and, hence, by the occupational titles given on this schedule; we know nothing of the property or of the labour process which the occupations entailed. Our categorization of occupations attempts to classify the titles in terms of the class position and labour process implied by these titles, rather than in terms of any sense of "status" or "prestige" ranking. Comparing these data to national figures for all heads of households of any type indicates that the distributions were generally similar. There are fewer farmers, 47.5 per cent for husbands who head the households versus 53.8 per cent for all households and there are slightly greater proportions of labourers and of merchants and manufacturers of all types as heads of coresidential units (15.2 versus 12.2 per cent and 8.1 versus 5.5 per cent, respectively).

In contrast the heads of second units are quite different in occupation from both the heads of the initial families and from the national labour force patterns. Many fewer gave "farmer" as an occupation, 27 per cent, and over a third called themselves simply labourers. Examining rural-urban differences reveals a striking contrast. There

**Table 6 Percentage distribution of occupations for male heads of the first and second families in coresiding households by urbanization**

Occupation	First Family			Second Family		
	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	Total
Merchant, Manufacturer	5.8	18.7	8.1	4.0	11.2	5.4
Professional, White Collar	1.6	8.0	2.7	4.8	10.8	6.0
Artisan	12.9	37.9	17.3	15.0	41.6	20.2
Semi-skilled	8.4	12.4	9.1	8.3	9.2	8.5
Labourer (including servants)	14.3	19.6	15.2	34.7	26.0	33.0
Farmer	57.0	3.4	41.5	33.2	1.3	27.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of Cases	373	295	454*	238	210	295*

\* Cases for the total sample differ from the rural and urban total due to weighting.

are remarkable numbers of heads of the urban families who are in bourgeois and other white-collar occupations. Less than 12 per cent of the national labour force are in these combined categories,<sup>41</sup> but over twice as many (some 27 per cent) of the heads of the first families in coresidential households are in them and over 22 per cent of the heads of second families. It is also surprising to find that artisans make up 38 per cent of the heads of the first families in urban areas and labourers just less than 20 per cent. Over 40 per cent of the second families are headed by urban artisans and 26 per cent by labourers.

It is possible, of course, that these results are artifacts of the data. For example, it might be that the classification of occupational titles inflates the bourgeois category. The term bourgeois refers to petty property owners and those in commercial occupations, such as small shopkeepers and agents, as well as to merchants and manufacturers of all kinds. But this is not likely the source of the unusual distributions, since the national figures are quite sensible and the category, though omnibus, is a quite clear one. Alternatively, it may be that distinguishing the bourgeois occupations from professional and other white-collar ones would show that it is the latter that are mainly represented in Table 6. In data not shown here, when the distinction was made, the results are not much different. Finally, it could be that these data are highly skewed as a result of selective census enumeration in which the bourgeois and professional groups were more conscientiously reported. We think the account unlikely given the results of the analysis of census occupational data in many other studies.

Two substantive explanations may be advanced. Perhaps the distributions reflect

41. *Ibid.*

## FAMILY CORESIDENCE IN CANADA

the size of the actual dwellings, so that more privileged occupational groups tend to have more space and simply can accommodate other families as lodgers. The notion is less persuasive than it initially appears because a number of studies of urban homeownership indicate that merchant, manufacturing and commercial groups tended not to be disproportionately represented among homeowners, but, in fact, tended to rent accommodation.<sup>42</sup>

In this context, Katz, Doucet and Stern have suggested an alternative account of homeownership patterns that may bear on the distributions found here. They relate the tendency for bourgeois and professional groups to rent accommodation to their attempts to use available capital for investments other than in the security of a home.<sup>43</sup> It may be that coresidence was one form of rental accommodation which served this purpose.

There is another aspect of the data not reported here that supports the previous interpretation. Examining family life-cycle patterns by occupational groups reveals that the bourgeois groups are much more likely to have been in the newly established family stage than any other occupational group. This pattern held for both the first and second families in the households. Of those in bourgeois occupations some 14 per cent of the first families and over 35 per cent of the second units were young couples without children. Artisan, labouring and farm families had less than 3 per cent in this earliest stage; in the case of the second families between 17 and 24 per cent were in the earliest family stage. It seems that bourgeois coresidents were more often newly formed families temporarily sharing houses in the expectation of future independence than was the case for other occupational groups.

More generally, these occupational patterns indicate that the sharing of households was not the preserve of the farming and unskilled groups as one might expect; farmers predominated in rural areas, of course, but rural artisans and members of the commercial and capitalist class were also well represented. In urban areas artisans and those in bourgeois and professional occupations were a clear majority of the coresidential families in every region, whether they were heads of the household or lodging families. Sharing dwellings was surely not a matter only of economic crisis in Canada in 1871.

### HOUSEHOLD ECONOMY, CORESIDENCE AND NETWORKS OF MUTUAL AID

The evidence drawn from the census has revealed that coresidential households in Canada in 1871 were very complex; they often contained adolescent or older children and they were as commonly the households of artisans and of small merchants, manufacturers and other commercial workers as of unskilled workers and labourers.

---

42. Doucet, "Working Class Housing"; Katz, Doucet and Stern, *Social Organization*, pp. 133-4; Darroch, "Occupational Structure".

43. Katz, Doucet and Stern, *Social Organization*, pp. 134-6.

## HISTORICAL PAPERS 1983 COMMUNICATIONS HISTORIQUES

An interpretation of the incidence and character of these complex households might begin with the suggestion of some recent studies that, throughout the early phases of capitalist development in North America, economic and cultural constraints continued to circumscribe tightly the extent of involvement in the market economy.<sup>44</sup> The household was the central institution in a hybrid system in which the direct exchange of goods and services was mixed with market transactions. Perhaps only in the most commercialized or industrialized centres had household-based production and exchange been largely replaced by dependence on wages and monetary transactions. Even in larger nineteenth century cities there is compelling evidence that the household retained its significance in a system of mutual dependencies among kin and friends.<sup>45</sup>

Clark has argued that this system of household production and local exchange networks continued far into the nineteenth century in the United States, though increasingly under pressure. In part this system was a response to the limits of external markets and, perhaps, the shortage of cash. Clark summarizes the interpretation this way: "Certainly [this system] was 'functional'. It was flexible and to a considerable extent met the needs of the producers. But it was more than that — it was the center of a distinct culture. It generated its own values, of cooperation, of work-swapping, of household integrity and family advancement, that were to be influential throughout the early periods of capitalist development."<sup>46</sup> In such a community livelihoods depended on networks of mutual aid involving continued reliance on neighbours and relatives. Even the transactions of local merchants, millers and agents were often exchanges in produce and services, as well as in cash.<sup>47</sup>

To establish the validity of the interpretation for Canada as late as 1870 clearly requires much more evidence that we can marshal here. But the view is congruent with the unexpected frequency and complexity of coresidential households. Our census data can be examined in one other way that is relevant to the thesis.

Table 7 presents evidence regarding the extent to which coresidential households were shared by families with similar characteristics. The question is simply whether those who resided together tended to be members of the same communities and likely relied on community networks to draw them together. The table gives the ratios of the observed to expected frequencies in a cross-classification of the occupations, birthplaces, and national origins of the heads of the coresiding families. The "expected" frequencies are based on the assumption that the characteristics of the two families are independent.

44. Michael Merrill, "Cash is Good to Eat: Self-Sufficiency and Exchange in the Rural Economy of the United States", *Radical History Review* (Winter 1977); James A. Henretta, "Families and Farms: *Mentalité* in Pre-Industrial America", *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Series, 35 (January 1978); Christopher Clark, "Household Economy, Market Exchange and The Rise of Capitalism in The Connecticut Valley, 1800-1860", *Journal of Social History*, 13 (Winter 1979).

45. Richard Bushman, "Family Security in the Transition from Farm to City, 1750-1850", *Journal of Family History*, 6 (Fall 1981).

46. Clark, "Household Economy", p. 175.

47. *Ibid.*, p. 174.

**Table 7 Ratio of observed to expected frequencies (assuming independence) for combinations of occupations, birthplaces, and national origins of the heads of the first and second families**

Characteristic of Head of First Family	Characteristic of Head of Second Family						Number of Cases
	Bourgeois and White Collar	Artisan	Unskilled Workers and Labourers	Farmer			
Occupation							
Bourgeois and White-Collar	3.2	1.8	0.5	0.4			25
Artisan	1.5	2.2	0.7	0.5			45
Unskilled Workers and Labourers	0.5	4.4	1.9	0.1			58
Farmer	1.2	0.5	0.8	1.7			126
Number of Cases	26	49	94	84			253
National Origin	English	Scottish	Irish	French	German	Other	
English	2.9	1.5	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.9	65
Scottish	1.6	4.7	1.0	0.0	0.4	0.0	23
Irish	0.7	0.3	3.8	0.2	0.4	1.2	48
French	0.1	0.0	0.2	2.5	0.0	0.2	104
German	0.5	0.4	0.8	0.1	6.2	0.5	37
Other	0.4	3.3	0.6	0.3	0.0	10.0	11
Number of Cases	62	23	49	109	30	15	288
Place of Birth	Canada	England and Scotland	Ireland	Other Countries			
Canada	1.2	0.6	0.5	0.6			201
England and Scotland	0.5	4.0	0.7	1.4			37
Ireland	0.5	0.6	5.5	0.0			27
Other Countries	0.4	0.4	0.9	5.8			20
Number of Cases	192	33	32	28			285

## HISTORICAL PAPERS 1983 COMMUNICATIONS HISTORIQUES

Each of the three panels in Table 7 provides strong confirmation of the notion that the members of these households were members of common social networks. Occupations have the most complex pattern, but even there it is clear that families sharing households also share occupations. The entries on the diagonal of the table are all greater than 1.0 and the off-diagonal entries are most often less than 1.0. The exceptions are that bourgeois and other white-collar workers have some tendency to reside with farmers (ratio = 1.2) and with artisans (1.5), though they are much more likely to coreside with other bourgeois families. Artisans are also more likely than expected to live with other artisans (2.2) but they have the most unexpected tendency to reside with unskilled workers and labourers (4.4) and to a lesser extent with bourgeois families (1.8). Because of the limited numbers of cases we are not able to untangle rural from urban trends, but one explanation might be that those with artisanal talents were commonly sharing the labour as well as the accommodation of the shared household, especially in urban areas.

The two lower panels of Table 7 give unqualified evidence that these coresidential households were not formed by chance. With only one exception, the observed correspondence in national origin and place of birth is much greater than the expected value. The exception is the slight tendency for "other immigrants" to reside with those from England and Scotland. Most of these are US-born immigrants. It is obvious that immigrant groups were heavily reliant on their own communities for household sharing. Those of English and Scottish background have a slightly greater than expected tendency to share houses and those from "other" ethnic groups tend to reside with the Irish a little more than one would expect. In sum, the evidence gives strong support to the suggestion that coresidential households were nodes in wider social networks which fostered mutual aid and exchange.<sup>48</sup>

## CONCLUSION

This paper focuses on the distribution and composition of households in Canada in which more than one family or marital unit resided. Coresidence has generally been treated as a relatively uninteresting form of household composition in North American community studies. A national perspective, however, indicates that rather large numbers of families shared households in nineteenth century Canada, and that well over one in every ten persons lived in such residences at the time of the 1871 census. Moreover, the distribution of the households was very uneven; there were rather few in Ontario and quite substantial numbers in Quebec and the Maritimes. In the urban areas of the latter three provinces between 20 and 30 per cent of *all* households were shared by families with different surnames. The question of whether many of these

---

48. This is not to argue that the household members were tied into closely knit communities or networks. On the contrary, relatively diffuse acquaintanceship networks may facilitate information flow and knowledge of opportunities and issues. See Mark Granovetter, "The Strength of Weak Ties: A Network Theory Revisited", in Randall Collins, ed., *Sociological Theory, 1982* (San Francisco, 1982), pp. 201-33.

## FAMILY CORESIDENCE IN CANADA

households were comparable to stem-family households, containing a married daughter and her parents, was answered by estimating the possible proportions of female "stems". The proportions were very low.

The detailed analysis showed that the households were more complex than previous studies had suggested. Some coresidence is the sharing of households with newlywed couples and those in the later stages of their family cycles, but there was a distinct tendency for coresidential families to have adolescent- and labour force-aged children in the households. The families in these households too often included self-reliant children for them to be seen primarily as the products of early family life-cycle "squeezes" or refuges for the needy. Frequently they were families with many productive members, which may have fused temporarily for the purpose of maximizing sources of sustenance and income. We also found that the households were often headed by artisans and those in bourgeois and petty bourgeois occupations as well as by farmers and labourers. The occupational distributions made clear that coresidence was *not* commonly an association formed as a result of agricultural crisis or urban destitution.

Drawing on recent US studies of the persistence of the household mode of production we suggest that household sharing might have been an aspect of a wider system of cooperation and sharing that retained its vitality throughout the period of early capitalism. The strong evidence that coresidential families were members of occupational and ethnic networks lends additional credence to the view.

The coresident households described in this paper defy classification into a single type or even a small number of types. They include families at all stages of the family life-cycle and of all types of occupations. One central implication is that these complex households do not in the main represent a response to crisis. Furthermore, the homogeneity in the occupations, nativities and nationalities of coresident families indicate that network structures provide a means to arrange the particular households. These relationships are far stronger than the patterns of age and family composition. The findings reinforce the argument that the complex households described in this study were a commonplace feature of nineteenth century Canadian society.